

OAK CREEK, WISCONSIN, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WANT TO SEE CHANGE

(Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, at a time when many adults question the seriousness and maturity of high school students, it is important for us to take a moment to pause to commend the group of high school students in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, who not only are doing something to improve our democracy, but I think challenge this very chamber to act in a responsible way.

A group of students in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, have formed their own political action committee entitled the Oak Creek High School FECA Fighters, for the Federal Election Campaign Act. They are collecting dollars and coins in a 5-gallon drum and will contribute it to presidential candidates who are supporting ways to change the way elections are financed. They do not like the law and want to see it changed.

Mr. Speaker, I commend these young students for getting involved in the democratic process, because this democracy only works as well as we make it work. It is the ultimate participatory sport, and these young people recognize that for this sport to continue, for this democracy to continue, they have to be involved. They are challenging us to reform the campaign laws. Let us follow their challenge and pass Shays-Meehan and make it law.

MARRIAGE PENALTY: TAX CODE PUNISHES TRADITIONAL, TWO-PARENT FAMILY

(Ms. PRYCE of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, at a time when the traditional two-parent family becomes increasingly rare, the Internal Revenue Service continues to punish this important institution. Studies consistently confirm what common sense already has told us: more two-parent families mean healthier children with a much greater hope at success in school, on the job, and in life.

The marriage penalty affects about 28 million working couples. They pay an average of \$1,400 in additional tax burden simply by saying "I do."

That is money that could be used to purchase a family computer, save for a child's college education, or make the car payments. Congress must address this immoral tax and strengthen the two-parent family, not punish it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge President Clinton to help Republicans enact significant relief from the marriage penalty this year. Republicans will not rest until the marriage penalty tax has been eliminated once and for all.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

(Mr. SHERMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in the New Democratic Coalition in addressing the House today on the importance of fiscal responsibility. There is huge pressure on us. Pressure to adopt the huge tax cuts proposed by George W. Bush, the governor of Texas; pressure to adopt hundreds of new government programs. With today's surplus, we can afford some responsible tax cuts and we can afford some additional efforts to deal with intractable social programs.

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But we should remember that the economic expansion that we are in now has already done more for the poor than 100 Great Society programs and has already done more for business than every tax gismo put into the 1981 tax bill that was designed to use the Tax Code and tax cuts to incentivize business expansion.

Mr. Speaker, we need fiscal responsibility and to pay down the debt for our seniors to keep Social Security solvent; for our children, so that we do not leave them a mountain of debt. But even perhaps, more importantly, we need fiscal responsibility. We need to be paying down the national debt in order to continue this unprecedented economic expansion.

MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY RELIEF

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, last year this Congress passed legislation to end the unfair marriage tax penalty. Regrettably, President Clinton chose to veto it. If he had signed our legislation into law, 28 million married couples could have had up to \$1,400 in additional tax relief this year. Especially, this extra money would have meant a lot to couples just starting out together.

Instead of having the choice to invest this money for their future or use it for everyday expenses they are forced to hand this hard-earned money over to the IRS. And this tax hits average wage earners the hardest. This is unfair.

Mr. Speaker, this House is still committed to ending the tax on married people. This year we will fix the marriage tax penalty.

I urge the President to work with us this time to make it happen.

DISCRIMINATION CLAIMS AGAINST LOCKHEED MARTIN

(Ms. MCKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thought Southern good ol' boys were a dying breed. How mistaken could I have been? They must have all just been hiding in Lockheed Martin's management suites.

Now, why do I say this? Just imagine a black woman having to get a bathroom pass from her white coworkers and then one of them having to escort her to the rest room to make sure she actually tinkles in the toilet.

And if you are in need of Ku Klux Klan robes and membership cards, I know where you can find some.

Just imagine coming to work and finding a noose hanging around your tool box.

Also, seems Lockheed has found the fountain of youth. How else could they have so many 50-year-old black boys working for them? Not surprisingly, discrimination claims are being filed against Lockheed Martin all across the South from Alabama to North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, if John Rucker needs a job, I think I found the perfect place to hide him.

TOTAL U.S. DEBT

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I bring this chart because I think if we do nothing else, we should be up front, very honest. We should not continue to hoodwink the American people in talking about reducing the debt of this country.

I bring this chart, the total debt of this country is \$5.72 trillion. I divide it in three segments: The Social Security debt, which is now about a trillion; the other trust fund debts are about a \$1.1 trillion; and the debt held by Wall Street or the debt held by the public is now \$3.6 trillion.

What we are doing, when we are saying everybody in Washington says we are paying down the debt, we are borrowing from Social Security; that is why the Social Security debt gets bigger.

Mr. Speaker, we are using those dollars borrowed from the Social Security trust fund to pay down the Wall Street debt, so the net total debt, subject to the debt limit, the total debt of this country that we are passing on to our kids continues to go up.

Let us be honest about it. Let us try to achieve a real balanced budget, and that means the total debt of this country does not continue to rise.

REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO STALL ATTEMPTS TO PASS MEASURES HELPING MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, last year the Republican majority failed to act on the basic issues facing hard working Americans. Time and time again, they sided with special interests over the public interest.

Today, the Republican leadership continues to stall attempts to pass measures that would help middle class families such as saving Social Security and Medicare, improving our public schools and passing real HMO reform.

The American public wants to protect Social Security and Medicare first. We should also be paying down the debt, instead of giving tax breaks to the top 5 percent. We need to pass a real Patients' Bill of Rights that lets doctors and patients make medical decisions, not HMO bureaucrats. And we need to provide a prescription drug benefit for all seniors. These should be our top priorities.

The Republican leadership needs to put the public's interest ahead of the special interests. Our families and our communities deserve a Congress that fights for them. We need the opportunity to address the real needs of the American people.

BIENNIAL BUDGET PROCESS WOULD ELIMINATE ELECTION YEAR GRIDLOCK

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I support the biennial budget process. That is that we should have: The budget process every 2 years and not every year. I have a bill, H.R. 493, to provide such a process. Senator DOMENICI, in the Senate, has a companion bill.

Why is this an improvement over the current process? I believe that by adopting such a measure we would remove all this political in-fighting partisanship every year, plus all the pork barreling that occurs so often.

What I would like to see is that in the first session we pass the first 13 appropriations bills, then in the second session we do oversight to find out what has happened with all this legislation that we passed. Is it working? The second session could also be reserved for looking at the emergency spending.

I think the current process is very partisan and we should remove it. So please support H.R. 493, the biennial budget process.

CONGRESS SHOULD PUT ITS FINANCIAL HOUSE IN ORDER

(Mr. MOORE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, it is time we put our financial House in order. We have the opportunity for the first time in a generation to do the right thing for ourselves, for our country, and for future generations.

We must begin to conduct our financial affairs in this country the way families across America have for years and years. For years they have observed three very simple but unspoken rules: Number one, do not spend more money than is made. Number two, pay off debts. And number three, take care of basics.

The basics for our country, Mr. Speaker, are Social Security, Medicare, national defense, and a number of other things that we could all talk about here.

Our willingness to do the right thing now will pay tremendous dividends to us now and to our children and grandchildren in the future in terms of lower interest rates, and in terms of \$243 billion that we paid in 1998 as interest on the national debt.

If we do this now, Mr. Speaker, we will do a tremendous thing for our country, and I ask all of my colleagues in Congress to join with me in an effort to begin the debate to pay down our national debt.

DO AWAY WITH MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, over the last several years many of us have asked a very fundamental question, and that is, is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code if individuals get married they pay higher taxes than if they stay single? Is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code that 28 million married working couples pay on average \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married?

Well, this House, under the leadership of the Speaker, is going to do something about that. Today, the House Committee on Ways and Means is going to have committee action on H.R. 6, legislation which will wipe out the marriage tax penalty for the vast majority of those who suffer it, providing marriage tax relief for 28 million married working couples; couples such as Shad and Michelle Hallihan, two public school teachers from Joliet, Illinois, who suffer the marriage tax penalty just because they are married.

Now, their marriage tax penalty is about \$1,000, just below average. But Michelle Hallihan told me, she said, "Tell your friends in Washington that the marriage tax penalty is real money for real people." That thousand dollar marriage tax penalty that Shad and Michelle suffer, they just had a baby, and she pointed out that that \$1,000 would purchase for her and her husband and her child 3,000 diapers.

Let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty. I am pleased a dozen Democrats have finally joined with us. We are going to make a bipartisan effort and wipe out the marriage tax penalty.

NEW DEMOCRATIC BUDGET

(Mr. CROWLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, last week the Congressional Budget Office released its latest estimates for the budget surplus. The CBO laid out three different on-budget surplus estimates ranging from \$800 billion to \$1.9 trillion.

Depending on the actions of this Congress, we can use the surplus wisely or it can be unwisely spent, without paying off the debt, shoring up Social Security, or funding desperately needed programs, such as providing prescription drug coverage for Medicare recipients and school construction and modernization of our schools.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that that we pay down the national debt. I fully support the President's goals stated in his State of the Union Address to eliminate public debt by 2013.

As has been indicated, this Congress, and implied by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, the Republican leadership will not adhere to the spending caps in the fiscal year 2001 budget. For this reason, it is imperative that we use the surplus to ensure the long-term solvency of Social Security and pay off the national debt.

Once we have done this, we can then use the remaining surplus and the money saved in interest payments on our debt to enact a voluntary prescription drug plan so that seniors do not have to choose between food and medication. We can help our crumbling schools and build new classrooms to relieve a system bursting at its systems. And, yes, we can even give targeted tax cuts to help hard working American families make ends meet.

ELIMINATE THE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago my wife, Libby, and I walked down the aisle. And we were lucky, we had a lot of family and friends there, who showered us with gifts. My wife seemed to have written thank you notes for a month or two afterwards trying to catch up.

Now, we got married in October. Well, come April we got a little notice from Uncle Sam. It was not a wedding gift, though. It was the marriage tax penalty. Because we decided not to live with each other; because we decided to get married, we had to pay more money. And just like Michelle and Shad Hallihan in Joliet, Illinois, we in Savannah, Georgia, had to pay extra.

Now, as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) said, Michelle is pregnant. She is going to have a baby. Uncle Sam is going to take away about